

PART II

Population

Where Washington's People Live

Because of the influences of topography, climate, accessibility and recent industrialization, Washington's population is distributed unevenly throughout the state. Over two-thirds of the people live in the western portion, concentrated largely in the industrial cities of Puget Sound. The Olympic Mountains and Willapa Hills of the Coast Range and the Cascade Mountains stand out as sparsely populated areas in western Washington. The Willamette-Puget Sound Lowland, extending from Vancouver on the Columbia River northward to Bellingham near the Canadian border, is the major population belt of the state. It contains a fairly well-distributed rural population on its river deltas and rolling, glacial drift plains.

The mountains, hills, plateaus, irrigable valleys and dry climatic conditions cause a generally clustered pattern of population settlement in eastern Washington. Mountainous areas including the eastern Cascade Mountains slope, the Okanogan Highlands, the Blue Mountains and the Selkirks have but few people. Dryland and upland areas which cannot be irrigated, such as large portions of the Waterville Plateau, the Channelled Scablands and the hills of Yakima County, are thinly settled. Both rural and urban population are concentrated in the irrigated Yakima, Kittitas, Wenatchee, Okanogan and Walla Walla Valleys and in the Pasco and Quincy Basins. In the far eastern section--the Palouse Hills--the uniform soil, topography and moderate rainfall permit a more evenly distributed population. The industrialized Spokane metropolitan area and the rich agricultural Yakima Valley are the major population clusters of eastern Washington.

Growth of Population

Washington was explored by Spanish, Russian, British and American expeditions between 1592 and 1805, but no settlement occurred until 1810. Ownership of the area was disputed by American and Great Britain. A compromise, the Joint Occupancy Treaty of 1818, permitted both American and British fur traders and settlers to live north of the Columbia River. British interests (the Northwest Company and the Hudson Bay Company) established fur trading posts at Spokane and Walla Walla in 1810 and 1818. American claims were strengthened by the Lewis and Clark Expedition (1804-1805) and by the settlements at Fort Spokane, Okanogan and Astoria by the Pacific Fur Company. The British increased their influence as they established agricultural settlements at Fort Vancouver and Fort Nisqually between 1824 and 1833. Settlement by Americans north of the Columbia, although permitted by treaty, was discouraged by the Hudson Bay Company which desired to maintain its fur trade monopoly.

A growing tide of American land settlers over the Oregon Trail during the 1840's changed the balance of control in favor of the United States. Most of the Americans settled in the Willamette Valley of Oregon. Unhindered by the British, several hundred American settlers moved northward across the Columbia into the Puget Sound country and soon outnumbered the British fur traders.

The conflict of interests was solved by the Oregon Treaty of 1846, which gave the United States the present area of Washington and established the Canadian boundary as it exists today. Oregon Territory (including all of the present State of Washington) was created in 1848 by Congress, with its capitol in Salem, Oregon. Settlers north of the Columbia met in 1851 at the Monticello Convention in present Longview, Washington, and asked for a separate territorial government. Washington Territory was created March 2, 1851, with a capitol at Olympia on Puget Sound. Isaac I. Stevens was appointed as Governor.

Population growth was slow before 1860. Lack of roads, the long distance from the East, and the difficulty of clearing the dense forests of the Puget Sound country kept immigration to a minimum. Indian hostility prevented settlement in most of eastern Washington prior to 1858, and that tended to slow movement into the Puget Sound Basin. The Washington population was only 11,594 according to the 1860 Census.

In 1863, the Washington territorial boundaries were changed to the present state lines by the creation of Idaho Territory. The Census of 1870 was the first to follow the present boundaries, and it enumerated a population of 23,995.

Population grew rapidly from 1870 to 1890. New transcontinental railroads brought large waves of immigrants from the East and Europe. The completion of the Union Pacific to the Columbia River brought new settlers into southeastern Washington. When the Northern Pacific reached Spokane in 1880 and was continued on toward Puget Sound, settlers occupied the Palouse and Big Bend wheat lands and the Yakima Valley. In 1883, six new counties were created in eastern Washington. Expansion of coastwise shipping and lumbering built up the cities on Puget Sound and at Grays Harbor. Washington Territory was admitted to the Union as a state in 1889. The population at that time was 350,000.

The period 1900-1910 was a decade of rapid growth in which the state gained 624,000 persons, more than doubling to 1,141,990. Two other railroads, Great Northern and Chicago, Milwaukee and Saint Paul, reached Puget Sound in 1893 and 1909, respectively. The lumber industry and agriculture supported more people; land and timber seekers homesteaded free public domain lands in the mountainous areas. The Alaskan gold rush doubled Seattle's population within a decade. Railroads and ships brought large numbers of people from Europe, who took up lumbering, fishing, mining and agriculture. Ranked numerically, according to the 1920 Census, the largest foreign-born groups in the state were Canadians (42,000), Swedes (35,000), Norwegians (34,000), English (23,000), Germans (22,000), Italians (18,000), Finns (12,500), Russians (11,000) and Irish (9,000).

Between 1910 and 1940 population grew at a slower but steady rate. The increase was about 20,000 per year. The lumber industry began to decline after 1929. Reduced employment and a growing scarcity of land were reflected in a slower rate of population growth. However, during the 1930's, many farmers from the Great Plains drought areas moved overland to Washington seeking farming opportunities.

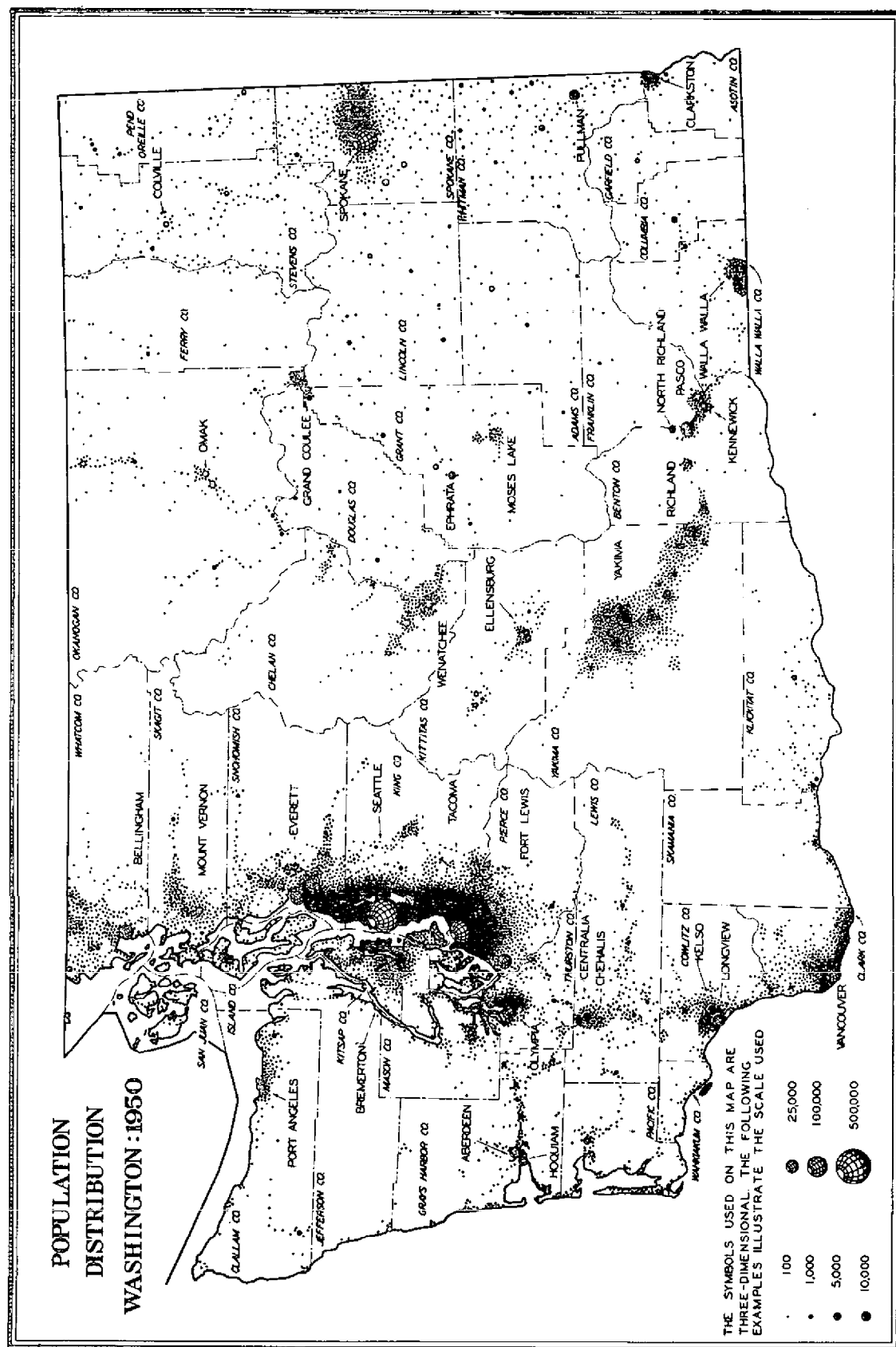
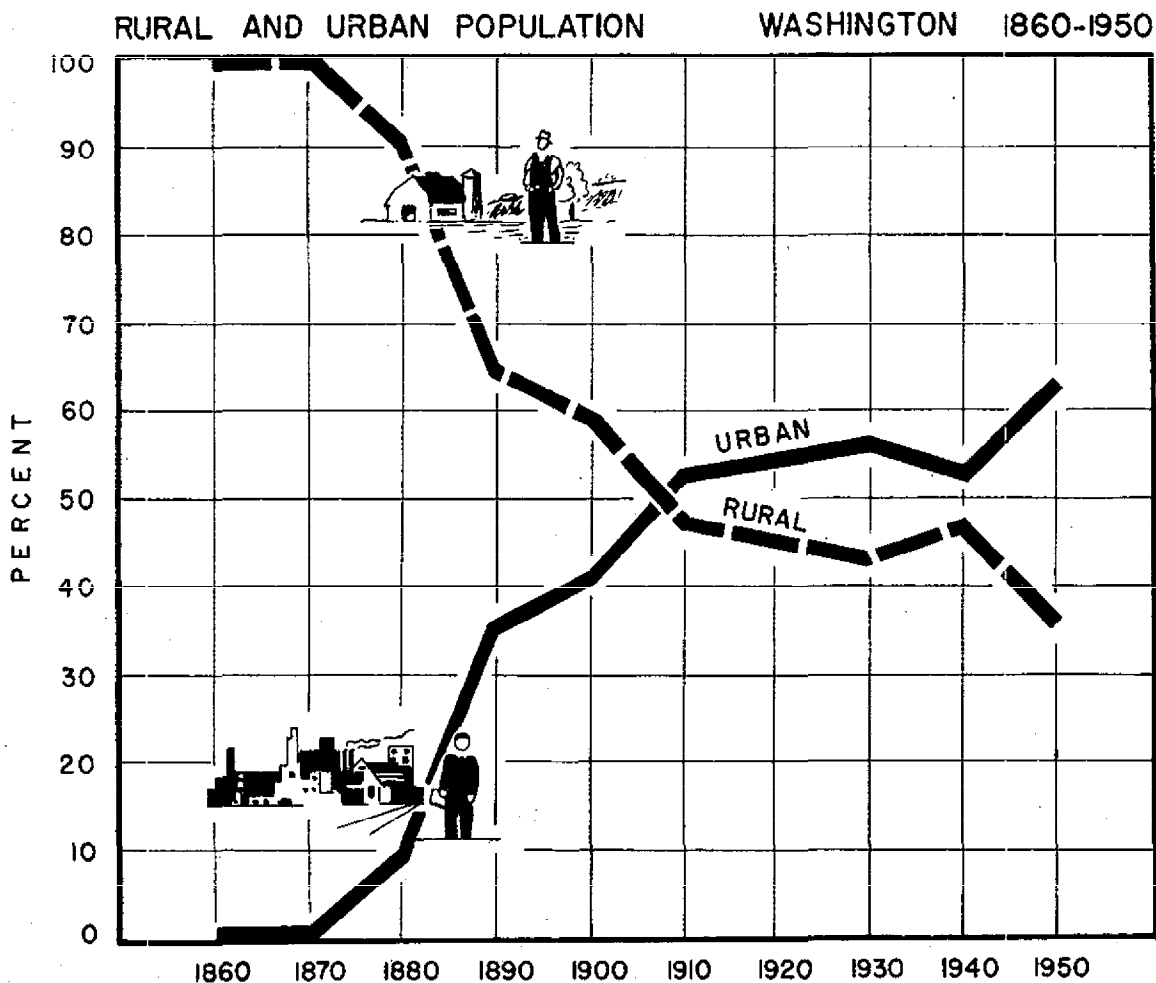
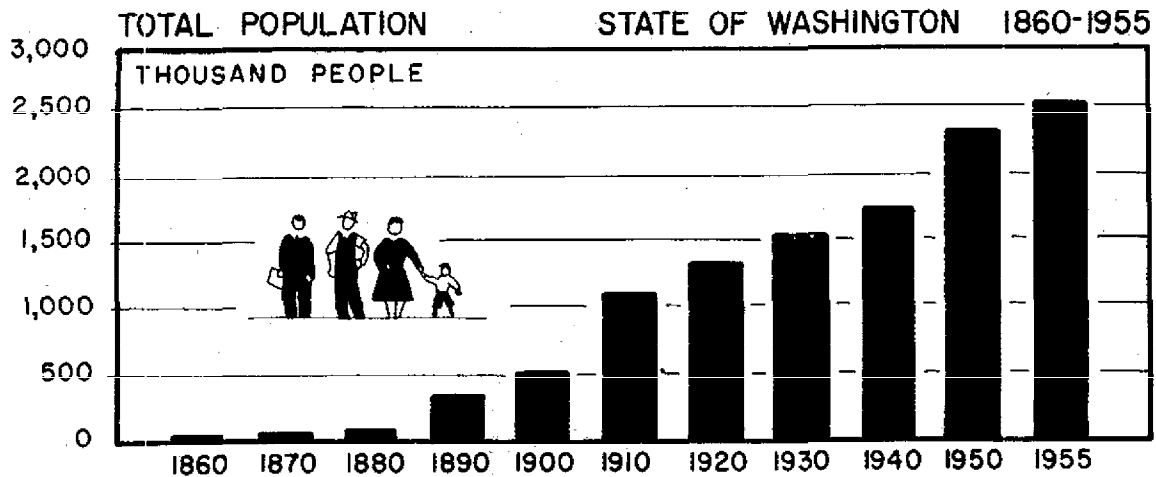


Figure 6.- DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION IN WASHINGTON, 1950 (Map by courtesy of Population Research Office, Washington State Census Board).



SOURCES OF DATA: U.S. Census 1860-1950; Washington State Census Board, Estimate - 1955.

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The 1940-1950 decade brought the greatest increase in Washington history. Primarily an overland movement of laborers to new defense industries, it resulted in an increase of 642,772 in ten years, raising the state population to 2,378,963 in 1950. Most of the new growth was in the industrial metropolitan districts in King, Pierce, Kitsap, Clark and Spokane Counties and at the Federal atomic works in Benton County.

Urban and Rural Population

In 1870 the entire population of Washington was living in rural areas--in villages and on farms. By 1900, 211,477 of the population of Washington, or 40.8 percent, were living in urban areas. In 1950, according to the Census definition of "urban" which includes residents of towns of 2,500 and larger, 1,503,166 persons, or 63.2 percent, were living in urban areas. And over 52 percent lived in three standard metropolitan areas comprised of Seattle, Tacoma, Spokane and their surrounding suburban cities and towns. This trend follows the national pattern.

Table 1.- Population of Washington
1860-1955

Year	Population
1860	11,594
1870	23,955
1880	75,116
1890	357,232
1900	518,103
1910	1,111,990
1920	1,356,621
1930	1,563,396
1940	1,736,191
1950	2,378,963
1955	2,580,000

Sources: U.S. Census, Population;
Washington State Census
Board, April 1, 1955
Estimate.

Bellingham (35,700), Everett (34,100), Bremerton (32,200), Walla Walla (25,400) and Longview (23,500).

The rural population is predominantly rural nonfarm, consisting of 602,026 persons who live in the country, but do not operate farms. The rural farm population decreased about one-fifth between 1940 and 1950, and numbered only 273,771, or 11.5 percent of the state's total 1950 population of 2,378,963. As a result of the farm-to-city trend in Washington, about one person in ten is living on a farm and about six persons out of ten are living in a town or city larger than 2,500.

According to the 1955 estimates of the Washington Census Board, the ten leading cities of Washington ranked as follows: Seattle (555,000), Spokane (182,000), Tacoma (156,000), Yakima (43,000), Vancouver (41,950),

Population of Garfield County

Garfield County's population is concentrated in the northern section. The county's population in terms of persons per square mile is relatively sparse being only about 4 persons per square mile. A majority of the people live in towns. The rural farm population is mainly scattered on large farms raising grain and livestock. Garfield County's population of 3,204 in 1950 ranked 39th among Washington counties, being tied with San Juan County for that rank.

Population is entirely rural and rural-nonfarm according to classifications used by the Bureau of Census. The county has no urban places by Census classification (an urban place being a town or city of 2,500 or over).

Pomeroy is the largest town with a population of 1,775 in 1950. The 1950 Census classified Garfield County inhabitants as follows: rural-nonfarm 1,891 (59 percent) and rural-farm 1,313 (41 percent).

The population growth and decline of Garfield County has been closely associated with the agricultural development of the county. During the pioneer settlement period many cattle ranchers and cattle farmers acquired homesteads. The decade of most rapid growth was from 1880 to 1890. Garfield County's population stood at 3,897 in 1890. During the next 20 years it increased by only 300 persons. The opening up of the prairies and hills for grain production and the coming of the railroad provided the stimulus for the rapid growth of the 1870-1890 period. Between 1910 and 1940 population declined from 4,199 to 3,383. During the latter part of this period there were low prices and a depression in wheat farming. The trend toward consolidation of farms which had begun as early as 1900 continued at a rapid pace. The rapid mechanization of cash-grain farming also displaced many of the people who were at one time employed in agriculture.

Table 2.- Population of Garfield County
1890-1955

Census Year	Population	Percent Rural	Percent Urban
1890	3,897	100	0
1900	3,918	100	0
1910	4,199	100	0
1920	3,875	100	0
1930	3,662	100	0
1940	3,383	100	0
1950	3,204	100	0
1955	3,200	100	0

Source: U.S. Census, Population

Pomeroy is the only incorporated town in Garfield County. It contains 1,775 people or 55 percent of the county's inhabitants. Other rural nonfarm people live in small unincorporated towns scattered over the northern section of the county. Many wheat and livestock farm operators live in the towns and commute to their properties during the crop planting and harvesting season. Pomeroy is the county seat located near the central part of the county.

Table 3.- Population of Incorporated Places
1910-1957

Incorporated City or Town	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1957 ^{1/}
Pomeroy	1,605	1,804	1,600	1,723	1,775	1,775

^{1/} Population for 1957 is estimate of the Washington State Census Board, April 1, 1957.

Sources: U.S. Census, Population.

Washington State Census Board.

Pomeroy grew steadily until 1920 when a peak population of 1,804 was reached. The town's population declined sharply during the 1920's with a total of 1,600 people reported in 1930. The town had grown almost back to its former peak by 1950 when 1,775 inhabitants were reported. Since 1950 the population of Pomeroy has remained nearly stable. Pomeroy is principally an agricultural trade center. It is also the terminus of a branch line of the Union Pacific Railway.

Typical of many counties of the western United States, Garfield County has been a melting pot of immigrants from many foreign lands. Free homesteads, low-priced and productive land attracted many immigrants from agricultural regions of the midwestern United States and Europe. In common with the other southeastern Washington counties, Germany and Canada furnished the most foreign-born immigrants. By 1890 about 8 percent of Garfield County's population was of foreign birth with Germans making up one-third of that total. Immigration from Europe declined after 1920 and by 1950 foreign-born citizens made up only 2 percent of the county's inhabitants.

Table 4.- Foreign-Born White Population, Garfield County

Country of Birth	1890	1920	1950
England and Wales.....	40	19	8
Scotland.....	9	4	1
Northern Ireland.....	--	--	--
Ireland (Eire).....	41	6	1
Norway.....	3	8	2
Sweden.....	23	16	6
Denmark.....	9	10	1
Netherlands.....	2	1	1
Switzerland.....	--	7	--
France.....	5	--	--
Germany.....	108	63	25
Poland.....	1	1	1
Czechoslovakia.....	3	--	--
Austria.....	4	1	1
Yugoslavia.....	--	--	--
Russia (U.S.S.R.).....	1	2	1
Finland.....	--	1	--
Italy.....	--	13	1
Canada-French.....	--	3	--
Canada-Other.....	52	19	15
All other countries...	15	5	3
Totals	316	179	67
Percent foreign-born	8.1	4.6	2.1

Source: U. S. Census, Population

Agriculture is by far the leading field of employment in Garfield County. About 44 percent of all wage earners and self-employed persons worked in agriculture in 1950. The second major type of employment was in miscellaneous services and third was work in retail and wholesale trade. Construction work employed about one person out of every twelve in the county's work force.

Minor occupations were manufacturing, forestry, county, state and federal government positions and transportation. The economy of Garfield County is highly specialized around commercial crop agriculture.

Table 5.- Employment of the Population
Garfield County, 1954

Types of Employment	Male Workers	Female Workers	Total Workers	Percent of Workers
<u>Total employed workers</u>	934	215	1,149	100.0
Agriculture.....	500	5	505	43.9
Forestry and fisheries.....	4	—	4	.3
Mining.....	1	—	1	.1
Construction.....	88	1	89	7.7
Manufacturing.....	63	5	68	5.9
Transportation.....	18	2	20	1.7
Retail and wholesale stores....	110	47	157	13.7
Miscellaneous services.....	93	121	214	18.6
Public administration (government employment).....	34	10	44	3.8
Other employment.....	23	24	47	4.1

Source: U.S. Census, Population

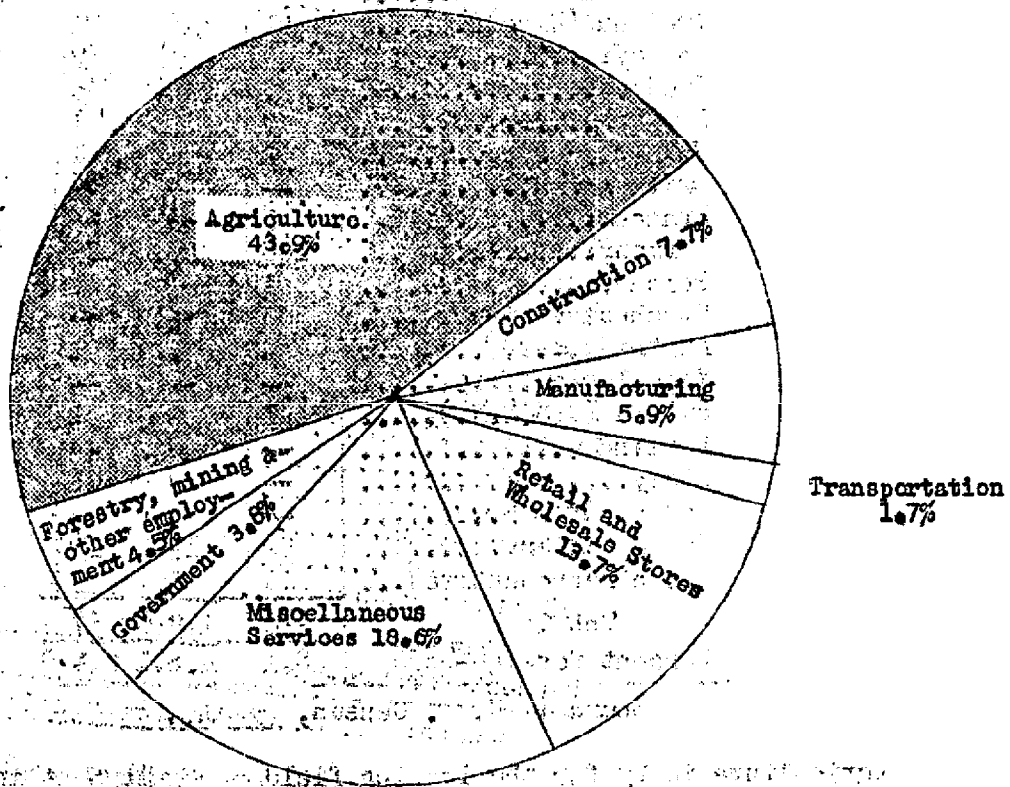


Figure 3.- Agricultural Employment Compared With Other
Employment in Garfield County, 1950
(Based on U.S. Census, Population, 1950)